

SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area (SCRCA) is a 2,154-acre parcel purchased by the State of Arizona, Maricopa County, and Town of Cave Creek (Figure I-1), and is managed by the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department (MCPRD) through Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) between these participants (Appendix A). It should be noted that these existing IGAs will take precedent over the contents of this master plan should a conflict arise pursuant to Sections 1.6, 5.4, 6.1.1, and 6.3 of the IGA developed between the Town of Cave Creek and Maricopa County. Further, quotas or use limits will not be implemented as a part of this master plan rather adaptive management decisions will be made in an effort to protect and conserve the natural and cultural resources of SCRCA.

The SCRCA encompasses all of Sections 5 and 6, and portions of Sections 4, 7, 8, and 9 of Township 6 North, Range 4 East, in Maricopa County as depicted on the New River Mesa 7.5-minute U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic quadrangle. This section briefly describes the scope of the SCRCA Master Plan (hereafter referred to as the Master Plan) and major recommended Master Plan goals. The Master Plan:

1. was developed through a comprehensive public participation process.
2. considered existing and proposed Federal, county, state, and local planning efforts in the region.
3. provides for the long-term monitoring and protection of cultural and environmental resources.
4. provides for non-motorized passive day use recreational activities.
5. embraces existing interpretive and education programs available at SCRCA.
6. utilizes an adaptive management decision-making process to implement Master Plan objectives.

7. provides a process for reviewing, revising, and amending the Master Plan.

Scope of the SCRCA Master Plan

The Master Plan addresses issues and provides recommendations for managing lands within SCRCA that conserve and protect cultural and natural resources while providing for non-motorized day use activities. The Master Plan reflects input received from agencies, stakeholders, and the public received within the two-year planning process that began in February 2002 (Appendix B). The Master Plan provides recommendations for management of environmental and cultural resources within the context of the U.S. Forest Service's Limits of Acceptable Change Process (LAC) and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), which were adapted and modified to meet the unique requirements of the Master Plan. The primary focus of the process was on the conservation and protection of environmental and cultural resources and a secondary focus on recreation, interpretive, and educational opportunities for visitors at SCRCA. The Master Plan is intended to provide a framework for management of SCRCA. Admittedly, this framework can be limited to the extent that Master Plan goals can be collaboratively achieved through long-term coordination efforts with surrounding landowners and agencies as well as continued development and participation of volunteer groups with an interest in achieving the vision of SCRCA. The following list contains primary goals addressed within the Master Plan:

1. to continue development of a comprehensive regionally integrated natural and cultural resources management program with adjacent landowners.
2. to provide for the continuity of land management and the transfer of knowledge during changes of SCRCA land managers and staff.
3. to provide for adaptive management, monitoring, and implementation strategies that account for current and future conditions within SCRCA.
4. to manage SCRCA for use and enjoyment of visitors that minimizes adverse impacts to ecological and cultural resources.

SPUR CROSS RANCH CONSERVATION AREA

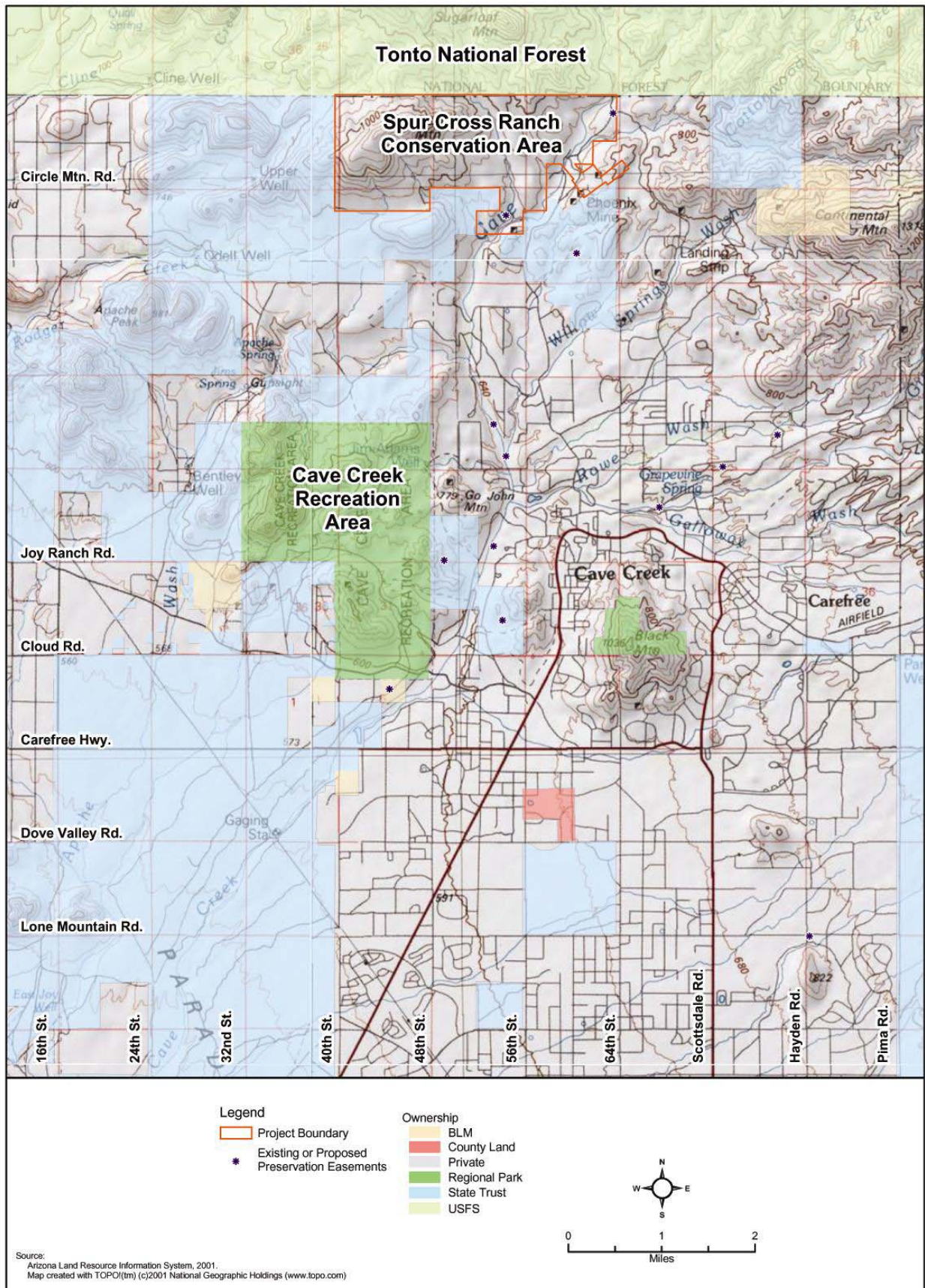


FIGURE I-1: Regional Map

5. to continue a pro-active collaborative approach in addressing the need for baseline environmental and cultural resource data within SCRCA.
6. to develop and implement a Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) database management system to manage, analyze, interpret, and archive data collected on SCRCA.
7. to ensure that implementation of management recommendations within the Master Plan are consistent with the vision of SCRCA.
8. to provide a process to review, revise, and amend the Master Plan.

It should be noted that long-term and continuous achievement of the vision of SCRCA requires identifying when impacts on environmental or cultural resources occur through long-term monitoring efforts while avoiding impact, and balancing increased visitation on SCRCA. Refinement of goals and objectives contained within this Master Plan should reflect the integration of current data available, incorporation of agency and public comment, as well as evaluation of implemented land management decisions.

SCRCA Master Plan Periodic Reviews

SCRCA land managers will produce an annual report in March for presentation at the Cave Creek Town Council meeting. This report will contain information related to the implementation of master plan goals and objectives during the previous planning year. At a minimum this report will contain the following:

1. Statement related to the types and locations of uses and users on SCRCA.
2. Statement regarding the tasks completed for the previous year.
3. Statement regarding proposed tasks to be completed in the up-coming year.